



United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

FITTING FOODS AND NUTRITION PROJECTS TO INTERESTS AND NEEDS

By Miriam Birdseye, Extension Nutritionist

You can interest all homemakers in some projects; you can interest some homemakers in all projects; but there are different stages in the homemaker's career, and you can't expect to interest all homemakers in all foods and nutrition projects to the same degree.

The demands upon the homemaker, and therefore her problems and interests, shift with the years as her home is established and her children are born, fed, trained, supported, educated, and sent out into the world. Especially during the early part of this period her hands and her thoughts are busy at home, and she may find it difficult to get out to meetings, and lack the urge to see the neighbors.

After a time, however, her family grows smaller, her housework lessens, financial strain may decrease, and she has only the grown-ups to feed. She has more leisure hours, more room and less company at home, and a greater craving for the society of her neighbors. A life of constant activity has developed her administrative ability and trained her to use every moment, and naturally she now seeks to fill the gaps with outside activities.

Let us see what projects seem most likely to appeal to the average rural homemaker at different stages of her homemaking career.

The following seem to be important at all stages of homemaking and thus are likely to prove interesting to groups containing both younger and older women:

Meal planning:

Checking for palatability, variety,
food value, economy of money, time.

Making necessary foods attractive.

Using home-grown foods.

Food supply:

Food-preservation budget, storage facilities.

Garden, orchard.

Home food manufacture:

Canning, freezing.

Bread making, other baking.

Home-grown cereals.

Cheese making.

Foods buying.

Hospitality:

Table service, table courtesies.

Company meals.

Sanitation:

Water supply.

Food supply.

During the early married years, young couples on the farm face such big problems as working out family relationships, building sound financial plans, and taking their place in the community. As the family increases in size, it becomes a problem to make time and money go around. The time- and money-management aspects of feeding the family assume importance. Equally important are the health aspects, and the psychological aspects are perhaps most perplexing of all. Hence, during the early years of home-making the following lines of work are likely to meet felt needs:

- Short cuts in food preparation.
- Short cuts in meal management.
- Planning the yearly food supply.
- Food accounts, as one part of the family budget.
- Feeding the family for health and happiness:
 - Standards for growth and nutrition.
 - Food for children, infants, mothers.
 - Building good food habits; overcoming food dislikes.
 - Making mealtime a constructive element in family life.
 - Children's parties.
 - Packing the lunch from home.
- Simple entertaining.

After her children have left home, the homemaker still does housework, gets meals, and plans the garden; she has the problem of prolonging the prime of life for herself and for her husband. She may wish to earn money to spend or to give away. She loves to entertain, to exhibit, and to take part in community meals. But life is less serious for her now that the children are grown up - more of a holiday.

As the pressure eases, the following lines of work are likely to intrigue the older homemaker:

- Food preparation:
 - Techniques.
 - Variety.
 - Standards.
- Exhibits.
- Community meals.
- Earning money through -
 - Marketing activities.
 - Entertaining tourists.
- Prolonging the prime of life:
 - The digestive tract and its care.
 - Food after 50.
 - Corrective feeding, for constipation, weight control, special conditions.
- Invalid feeding.